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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

George McEldowney (GM)

July 20, 2000

Honolulu, O'ahu

BY: Holly Yamada (HY)

HY: This is an interview with George McEldowney. This is the second session. It's July 20, 2000.

Okay, I think last time we left off and you—we've got you to UH and you were at—talking about Hui Lōkahi, your fraternity. You talked about initiation.

GM: Yeah. Hui Lōkahi I think had average membership during the years I was there about twenty maybe. And we went through the normal pledge system and all of that. We thought we got a good group of people. We were very—socially very well bonded together. And we did a lot of interesting things. We always had an annual dance. We tried to have the dance different, like on board a ship or on board—I think one time we had one down at the old dance hall that was at where Fort DeRussy is at now. We had a prison motif and had steeled gates and all kinds of things and everybody dressed in prison clothes. We had another good party out at Castle and Cooke vacation place they had at—or Matson, I guess it was Matson Navigation Company. They had a place at Kualoa, out in that area. We had a lot of events like that. So I enjoyed the years I was with the fraternity.

HY: You had mentioned that that fraternity, unlike some of the other clubs, was a real ethnically mixed group.

GM: Yeah we didn't worry too much about that sort of thing. Anybody we thought fit in the group we'd go after them, pledge them. So we had a mixed group.

HY: And were—I think you mentioned that there were athletes, how you folks were mostly athletes.

GM: Yeah most of them were. At one level or another. Football, or basketball or soccer and track and things like that.

HY: I guess last time you talked about your first year and that you were something like a general science major but you changed your mind. You went and worked for a while.

GM: Yeah that was—I couldn't see much application of what I was doing. And so I went out to work for a while and I came back.

HY: What did you do during that ...

GM: I worked with the HSPA experiment station at Waipi'o right near Waipahu. Worked for a year out in the field there. I worked on the various plantations running experiments and helping to harvest sugarcane. Generally got a feel of the industry and so when I decided to go back to school I went back to sugar technology. And that I enjoyed. Sugar tech of course in those days was more or less sponsored by the HSPA. And we had classes at the experiment station the last—in fact the whole last semester was at the experiment station in Makiki. The summer before that we all worked on a plantation. A friend and I went to work at Pu'unēnē Sugar [Mill] on Maui for I think eight weeks something like.

HY: But this was part of the ...

GM: Part of the sugar tech course, yeah. The plantation made housing available for us, but we paid our own way. We mainly studied the processing of sugar in the mill and writing a report. That was interesting. I enjoyed that.

HY: What were the accommodations like when you were on Maui then?

GM: They gave us a house right near the mill. It was the supervisory type of house. Nice place.

HY: You were—you said you were studying the processing?

GM: Sugar processing in the mill.

HY: Were there—like was this like a research project or you were just observing?

GM: We were just observing, recording what the mill did, how it did it, what—how they controlled their products and how they ground the sugar, treated the juice. Just how the sugar mill worked.

HY: And so then when you started back at UH, you were now full into your major.

GM: Yeah.

HY: Maybe you could talk about some of your teachers, if you remember, that may have been influential on you.

GM: [Frank T.] Dillingham, [W.R.] and McAllep and [Carl B.] Andrews was engineering, civil engineering. I took that.

HY: So you took courses from him in engineering as part of your major?

GM: Right. Sugar tech included civil engineering, included courses in hydraulics and those type of engineering, as well as chemistry and botany and physics.

HY: Your wife is telling you to mention Webster.

GM: Dean [Ernest] Webster. Yeah he was the Dean of [Men and Dean of Student Personnel]. He was our chief advisor.

HY: Now did you have much interaction with him?

GM: He was involved in laying out your course work and what courses you had to finish before you could get your diploma. So he was active in that part.

HY: How would you characterize the classroom atmosphere? Now you're in college and you're on your way to your degree.

GM: Well I think that—I think the classes generally speaking were well conducted. We were there to learn and the classes were relatively small. Sugar technology, I think, maybe the total number of people involved in that were, the students were, no more than fifty at the most. Counting all freshmen, junior, sophomore, and senior there were about fifty. Many of them went on to plantations and many did not. But that was the course of study. There was a well-rounded course of study because you learn lot of things [that] became useful later on. They had use to me.

HY: What about the informality and formality of the classroom setting? I mean you know, did the teachers interact a lot with the students? Or was it quite formal?

GM: Well I think it was more on the formal side because it was science and that sort of thing. It was a little more formal. And we all dressed—no one wore shorts or anything like that. We were pretty formally dressed but we didn't wear neckties. But other than that it was mostly all business in the classroom, I'm sure.

HY: Who were the students that were with you that were in that program? Who generally? Were they, you know, kids that had grown up here, from this island or—could you [talk about] demographics?

GM: Yeah most of the people in the class had something to do with the sugar or pineapple industry. Their parents lived in the country and had some connection with it. And they had a common interest in sugar because that was the big industry at that time.

HY: What was your thinking then, at that time, in terms of your career? Did you think you would then be working for the sugar companies?

GM: Yeah, my plan was to go into sugar, in the plantations. I didn't know whether—one island or another didn't particularly enter into it. Just you would go to work in the sugar plantation and you knew you'd start down at a fairly low level, either the supervisor level or as a research level. We all kind of aimed in that direction. But when the war came along that changed a lot of things. What you might have thought you were going to do, you'd never get back to. I think that the class that graduated about the time I did, I don't think any of them went into sugar. They all went into something else. But that was because of the conditions at that time, I think.

HY: Well maybe this a good time to talk about the ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps]. You were in ROTC.

GM: Yeah that was a lucky, good decision I made because we—although we had to get up at 7:30 in the morning and go to drill. And the uniforms in those days came with roll puttees, which were hard to roll and get right. They would come loose in the middle of the parade or something and you'd be really embarrassed. But the ROTC was a good thing because when the war came along you already had a commission so you were starting not at the bottom. You were at the bottom of the officer's rank, but at least you

were that far along. And then I continued with being involved in the military after I got out of the service in '45 and went into the National Guard and stayed right through. Kind of made a career out of that too. Back then it was hard to think about it when you're twenty years old that you have something for retirement. But that was a good decision I made. Now I have retirement that helps things out.

HY: Maybe you could talk about your supervisor or your—the officer that you worked under ROTC at UH.

GM: Yeah. Of course they had the basic and advanced course. The basic course, everybody had to take ROTC in those days, the basic course. And the advanced course you were selected, or passed an examination and were selected, and you became a non-commissioned officer in the ranks. That was two years. At the end you received a commission. In between there was summer camp. You went to Schofield for summer camp. The pay was—we were paid, in the advanced course we were paid, as I remember, it was thirty-five cents a day for every day we went out. That was based on the pay a private in the army got at that time, which was $18.35 a month. That divided up would get you thirty-five cents a day. That was fortunate too because I could use that for lunch money. Thirty-five cents would buy you a good lunch. (Chuckles) I always remember the thirty-five cents and the lunch. But you learned responsibility. You learned how to instruct and you learned teaching. So I got my commission before I graduated, and I got my commission in '39, so I went back to the University and I instructed in the ROTC program while I was going to school because I had the time to do it. That was a good experience for me because you really learned how to instruct.

HY: So then you were sort of a colleague with some of the people that you had been a student with.

GM: Yeah, one of the instructors.

HY: Another thing that you were involved in was sports at UH.

GM: I was mainly interested in track and I was captain of the track team one year. I think that was 1939, maybe. And I was on the soccer team. At one point I coached swimming in the morning. They had a morning class that didn't have enough instructors to go around so they had student instructors for swimming for the freshman class because everybody had to take swimming. And I enjoyed that part too. I enjoyed the track. We competed against military teams and against a couple of the athletic clubs in Honolulu. Rainbow relays and some of those track meets, AAU [Amateur Athletics Union] track meets. We were out at Schofield and one of the teams involved in the Schofield army track meet. And we went to Maui one year. So that was—it was good experience, track. I liked it.

HY: What were the track events that you were in? Do you remember?

GM: I was mostly interested in the sprints at 220 [meters] and 440 [meters] and high jump. Longer distances I didn't really compete in. They had other people that were far better.

HY: Was that—did you do those events in high school too?

GM: In high school track. I tried football in the University of Hawai'i for about two weeks and I decided I was either going to play football or go to school. One of the two, not both. So

I decided there were other people better in football than I was going to be. So I dropped out of that. Those two weeks were pretty rough in the beginning.

HY: Now as a student did you attend a lot of the games then?

GM: Yeah I attended most of them, I guess. Especially football. Football was down at the stadium. See another thing I did down there, I ushered at the stadium. University students could get a job ushering, one dollar a game. And I earned a few dollars. But, yeah we used to go to the football games, and the soccer matches. Soccer matches were on Sunday, and track meets were usually on Saturdays.

HY: Now were those events well attended too? I know football has always been the biggest draw.

GM: Well of course here at the Old Honolulu Stadium and they filled the stadium. And the university football team played local teams like the town team. Those locals were almost like semipro teams. Then they brought in—the University of California came down and San Jose State [University] came in and played. So they had some Mainland teams. But generally speaking it was local teams.

HY: What about attendance for a soccer game?

GM: Oh the soccer was held at Makiki field. Makiki field was much larger than it is right now because the freeway cut off a large area of it. But in those days that's where the soccer games were played on Sundays. And again we played some local teams but also visiting British ships would come in and play. Some of the British players. That was always good.

HY: Were they part of the military?

GM: Some of them were and some were off around the world liners and the crew would come in and play.

HY: So these were probably older guys?

GM: Oh yeah, they were. They played a different brand of soccer. I think we played ours with half football and half soccer [rules] and theirs were all soccer. And they could handle it. They were much better at handling the ball than we were but it was a lot of fun. I think we played some Australian or New Zealand people off of—Australian or New Zealand ships, the naval ships.

HY: So was this somewhat informal then? Or were these regularly scheduled games?

GM: Well those were usually slipped in between the regular games. Maybe it'd be a extra Sunday or something like that. Whenever a ship came in they wanted to play. They wanted to get out and exercise, I guess. So we'd play them. They weren't in any kind of league with us.

HY: I think when I first met you, you mentioned some of your coaches, Percy Deverill?

GM: Yeah, Percy Deverill was a track coach. And Luke Gill was a basketball coach. [Otto] "Proc" Klum was the football coach. He was a legendary coach. Later on Luke Gill took

over. I remember Luke Gill also coached track too. And there were Ralph Yempuku, who later became a sports promoter in Honolulu, was always around in sports as a manager because you had student managers for all the sports. It was an interesting period. The military helped a lot as far as sports was concerned because there were about maybe six regimental teams in Schofield and they all had track teams and they all had football teams, and so they had a lot of sports interaction with the military. Otherwise the University would really have nobody to play because there were no other colleges around so that provided the opponent that helped train the people.

HY: And I think you mentioned also that you were on the board for athletes.

GM: Yeah, I was on the Board of Athletic Control. I was a student representative. And the board was responsible for running all of the athletics, the financial side as well as the scheduling and making the arrangements to schedule Mainland teams. They brought the University of California down. Those sort of things. It was a fair amount of money but during the years I remember we usually broke even on the games. There were enough to fill the stadium.

HY: As a student representative were you—was this a situation where you would vote on things?

GM: Yeah, we'd vote on, discuss, and vote, make decisions on what teams they want to try to invite for the next year and any kind of policy involving who is eligible to play or not eligible to play. Things like that, anything that having to do with the athletic program.

HY: Was this an elected position?

GM: That I don't remember. I think the administration selected student body people. I don't remember that too much.

HY: Were there ever any controversial things that came up that the board had to deal with?

GM: I don't remember any. I remember one time at a track meet, the university refused to participate in the track meet because AAU didn't recognize the university as being a team. So all the fellas decided well [if] they're not going to recognize us as a team, we're not going to run. Which I felt was a mistake, but that's what happened. So that was the only big controversy I remember.

HY: So you boycotted?

GM: Yeah. Most of us could have won medals and things like that but we just sat around and let somebody else win the medals. I didn't like it but …

HY: Did that further your cause at all?

GM: Not at all. Didn't do anything at all, except we lost a bunch of medals.

HY: What about other campus events you mentioned last time. Mary [Dillingham] Frear, she was on the Board of Regents.

GM: At that time, the university toward the end—this is getting close to World War II. There was a big peace movement on, America First sort of thing. They were agitated to keep America out of the war. America doesn't belong in the war and that sort of thing. So it must have been in '38 I guess—'37, '38. A big demonstration was going to go on on the campus. These people were going to demonstrate and rally for peace. It was on an open area, below the—Dean Hall I guess, between Dean Hall and the swimming pool. And they were going to have a rally there. All the ROTC boys went down in uniform and they were going to show their side of the story. In the midst of all this rally business, speeches, and yelling, jumping around and waving signs, somebody started throwing eggs. There was a photographer that was up in a tree taking a picture from an upper level. He was up the tree and somebody threw an egg at him and it missed him. And one of the Board of Regents was standing there, Mrs. Frear, was standing there and it hit her square. Everybody was embarrassed about that. I don't think the rally lasted much longer after that. And the ROTC boys, they were ready to clean up the whole place. All the football players, too. So I don't know how that thing came out in the end but that was the big event.

HY: So would you say that there was a kind of a big isolation movement on campus?

GM: Oh yeah.

HY: A lot of students?

GM: There were a bunch of people. You know, they were against any involvement at all in the European conflict. Actually, war had not started but there was agitation already starting. Germany didn't really go into Poland until '39 so it had to be before that. So probably about '37, '38, something like that.

HY: And, let's see. Did we miss any of the other activities you were involved in? You mentioned sports, Board of Athletic Control, your fraternity. Oh, I know you were involved with theater a little bit.

GM: A little bit, not too much. I didn't have too much to do with that. In the beginning maybe, freshman year a little. But after that, not too much. But that was of course in Farrington Hall. They had to put on a whole season of different plays and a lot of popular plays they put on. I thought they did a real good job.

HY: And did you continue to go to some of these performances then?

GM: We'd go to the performances, yeah. They were well attended. I think it had a fair standing in the community too in those days. There weren't many theater groups around. It was done very professionally so people did come.

HY: This is where you met your wife.

GM: Yes, about that time. About that same time, yeah.

HY: Since I asked her about it I should ask you about it too.

GM: I think it was at that—we got to know each other.

HY: So that was—was that kind of a social environment working backstage?

GM: It would be yeah. Because we were together quite a few nights in a row, or days in a row, putting the scene together. It was a fairly intensive. I think they put on about four performances maybe? About four performances. So [we] had to make all the sets and get all the stuff ready, and you had people there to change the sets. So it was kind of a social gathering. People got to know each other that way.

HY: Did you ever do anything in front—on stage? Were you ever acting?

GM: I had a part in one of the pieces, one of the shows called, *Yellow Jack*. I had a small part in that. I'm sure I wasn't very good at it, but I had a part anyway.

HY: What about other activities? Did we miss any?

GM: (Pause) No.

HY: Now, did you play basketball as well?

GM: No. There were always lots of activities, organized activities, but I don't remember.

HY: Now, it was just the first year you stayed in Atherton House. And then [after that], is this when you were living in Nu'uanu with your uncle?

GM: I stayed in Atherton House for a year, I think it was. Then I commuted back and forth to Wahiawā for a while. Then I went to live at my aunt and uncle's place in Nu'uanu because it was closer and easier to get to. I lived there for two years, I guess it was. Something like two, three years. Then of course I got out of school, I started working. During the summers I worked for the pineapple people in Wahiawā. And when I got out of school I applied for jobs on the plantations. In those days the plantations were kind of beginning to shrink a little bit and they weren't hiring many people. They were kind of interested in hiring people from the Mainland for some reason. I don't remember why. But anyway, so many of us who graduated went into other fields. I went to work for the Territorial Highway Department. It was a survey gang, and we worked on a job down in Waialua. While I was there I was offered a job with the Dillingham corporation it was Hawaiian Contracting Company at that time. I went to work for them on Maui for a period. I've forgotten how many months. They were building bridges along the coast down Hāna Highway. And I worked there for, perhaps six months or so and then they transferred me back to Honolulu to work on defense related jobs that they had.

The contracting company was one of the prime contractors in building barracks and other facilities for the military. At all of the army posts they put up new barracks because they had a big influx of troops coming in. And I worked there until the war started.

When the war started, I was called into active duty. I got a telephone call at nine o'clock at night to report the next morning to Fort Shafter, which was a big surprise because here I am working on defense work and I'm ordered to active duty at Fort Shafter. So I think for the first two weeks I spent time on both jobs. Then I was at Fort Shafter for the early part of the war.

When I got to Fort Shafter the—this is right after the war started, everything was in turmoil, of course. They moved all the troops out of Fort Shafter. The 64th Coast Artillery was at Fort Shafter. They moved them out to the beach positions. So they formed another unit which I joined to run the post itself because the post was the headquarters of U.S. Army Pacific. And they needed a unit to run the post and housekeeping and all of that. After I joined I was a censor and I was an engineering officer, and I was a PX [post exchange] officer, and a postal librarian officer. You name it I was it. That lasted for quite a while. That was—that was turmoil. I learned a lot. It was interesting.

I ended up being a trial judge advocate, which is like a prosecuting attorney. All of sudden one day, they told me, "You're it." So then I had to go study and learn how to be a prosecuting attorney for soldiers that had broken regulations. They could be sentenced up to six months. That was pretty serious work then. People we tried were people that were en route to Hawai'i from the Mainland. These were violations of orders and so that had occurred en route. So when they arrived at Honolulu they had to courts-martial these people. So they designated our command as a courts-martialing organization. So we picked up all kinds of people and courts-martialed them. That was an experience I never expected when I was going through ROTC. But it was a broadening experience.

HY: I'm wondering about your ROTC experience and some of your fellow ROTC students. When the war started Japanese members were discharged initially.

GM: Yeah, they didn't order them to active duty before the war. There were a few of them, they went on to intelligence work but most of them were not ordered to active duty until they began forming the 100th [Infantry Battalion] and 442 [nd Regimental Combat Team], then they were. Although, there were quite a few of them in the National Guard who were on Kaua'i, and on the island of Hawai'i. And they remained in the National Guard until they formed the AJA [Americans of Japanese Ancestry] units and then they transferred to those.

HY: Well what was your feeling about that, your relationship to your—the students?

GM: We grew up with them. It didn't make sense to me what they were doing, the isolation. These people were qualified and they were trained. You're just throwing away a bunch of trained people. You should never have trained them in the beginning if they were going to isolate them. It didn't make sense. And I had no trouble serving with them at all.

HY: Did you graduate in 1940? Is that right?

GM: I graduated in 1940, right.

HY: So when you returned in '39 and you're teaching, you're still a student as well.

GM: Right. I got my commission in '39, June of '39.

HY: Do you remember where you were exactly December 7 [1941]?

GM: Yeah, I was up in Nu'uanu. There was a bunch of us living in Jack Lane. There were, I think, six of us all working in various jobs—in construction, things like that. Everybody had different jobs. But we were all baching together. And we woke up that morning and my brother was staying with me and we woke up that morning and heard all these

explosions going on. Then we got up and wondered what was going on. We saw these big black puffs up in the sky knowing that that was for real, not for play. So we drove up to ʻĀlewa Heights and looked out over and that's when we saw all of Pearl Harbor I believe. About that time the radio came on with the announcement that all military people return to their organizations and all construction people return to their contract job. And so there was a lot of traffic going out of Honolulu towards Schofield, towards Pearl Harbor.

We went—our headquarters was where Pier 39 and [Pier] 40 is now. And that was the headquarters of the Hawaiian Contracting Company. So we all reported down there. We never went home for about three days, I guess. Stayed and slept right in the office. Work continued. We didn't really stop working, except maybe shifted jobs. They made a big change in the priorities of the jobs right then and there. They wanted trenches dug, they wanted barbed wire put up, and so the jobs changed somewhat. But the jobs right on the different military posts continued, in fact, accelerated. Worked long hours and tried to complete the work they'd started in anticipation of troops coming in. That was a lively morning. One of the Japanese planes flew right smack over our office there, just above the tops of the trees. Everybody was running around trying to find stones or something to throw at it. It was that low. And that plane, I think, was the one that went down and strafed the planes that were sitting on the runway getting ready to take off. I think probably one of the planes that crashed later at Hickam Field. But it was sure low to the ground and you could see right in the plane. That was the highlight of the morning. When the second wave came in they started firing antiaircraft, real heavy antiaircraft fire. And some of the antiaircraft shells landed right in the area where we were. The fuses weren't properly cut so they didn't explode in the air. They exploded on the ground. That wasn't good. So we stayed—we had a kitchen there and so we cooked meals and people just stayed there for three days.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

HY: Okay, okay.

GM: Our soccer coach at the University of Hawai'i was Felix Keesing. And Doctor Keesing was—what was his field? He was an anthropologist, but he had a soccer background. He was originally from New Zealand so he had kind of a soccer background, and he was our soccer coach. He and John Wesley Coulter—Coulter was also involved in soccer. He and Keesing both. And Dr. Coulter was geography, and he later went in the military effort. He knew all the islands and stuff to the south of us, and the military needed that knowledge. He was very valuable. They were both good soccer coaches.

HY: Maybe that's the connection to you playing some of the New Zealand teams.

GM: Could be.

HY: Yeah. You had mentioned that there were students that you met at Punahou that you later connected up with at UH, and some of your relationships with them.

GM: Gerald Greenwell, and Vernon Hargrave, and . . . .

HY: Well, you mentioned Dillingham.

GM: Yeah, Ben Dillingham. He went off to school in Cornell or some place.

HY: Oh, okay.

GM: And (pause) I mean, it's kind of hard to remember all these people.

HY: Yes.

GM: But there were quite a few that came up from Punahou that I got to know again.

HY: I was wondering, too, about when you started working pineapple during the break that you took [from] UH. Was it your connections with your dad, or how was it that you got those jobs?

GM: Oh, I don't know. I think, well, pineapples in those days, the summer crop was when they harvested pineapple. Now pineapple is pretty much a year-round event. But in those days, June, July, and August were the three heavy months for harvesting pineapple. So they would hire where available. So there were lots of summer jobs, and we worked out in the fields. I mostly checked—we were keeping track of the amount of fruit taken out of the various fields, and shipping out on the railroad in those days. That was four years.

Well, one year I ran an experimental gang. It was picking pineapple with a machine. That was an interesting period. Because from those experiments, the pineapple picking machine was later developed—used after the war where they redesigned the fields and designed the machine to fit the fields. Before we were trying to make the machine fit the fields that they had. That didn't really work. So by redesigning both the fields and the machine together, then the system worked. But that was very early. We had mules pulling our cart. And the cart had gasoline engines that picked up the pineapples and so on. But it was mule-drawn. So that was quite a ways back. It got rid of the mules in a hurry when they redesigned the fields. So the system hasn't changed a great deal. It used to have lug boxes, which were small boxes. It put all the pineapples in lug boxes. The lug boxes would be loaded on a train or a truck and sent to the cannery in Honolulu. Then the lug boxes would be returned and refilled again. And when they redesigned the machines and redesigned the field, they went into bulk handling. So all the pineapple were put into the bulk (trailers). They found out it's not damaged that badly. It was much more economical than having to sort all the boxes. But the lug-box system gave a lot of work to kids that go out and sort the pineapples by size and put them in various lug boxes. So it was a labor-intensive job. So there was lots of work for high school and college kids, both in the cannery and out in the field.

HY: Shall we jump back again into the war days?

GM: I was at Fort Shafter for a couple years, two years or something. During that period we got married. I was at Fort Shafter. Then after that I was company commander at Fort Shafter. About that time they promoted me. They transferred me out into the field. So I ended up out at Kahuku Air[Base]. Company commander out there with the 298th Infantry [Regiment], which had been a Hawai'i National Guard unit. I stayed with them for the rest of the war. Stayed with them when we went down to the South Pacific. We were down in the South Pacific for eighteen months, I guess it was. We were in Espíritu

Santo and Guadalcanal. We eventually returned to Honolulu. About the time we got back to Honolulu, we were transferred out by battalions out to the various islands. Our battalion went to Hawai'i and we stayed there about a week. Then they transferred us all back into Honolulu because the military realized they needed more service troops than combat troops because they're building up for the invasion of Japan and they needed all this material to be moved forward. So they needed a lot of stevedores. They converted the whole 298th Infantry into a service battalion down on the waterfront, and training battalion, and the [unit] Jungle Training Center and a replacement depot battalion out at Guam. So I ended up working on the waterfront, an operations officer at the waterfront. And I served a period of time in Hilo as the support commander in Hilo. Then back at Honolulu as operations officer of the Honolulu waterfront. That included the area from Kewalo Basin to Piers 39 and 40, which is pretty near the whole waterfront.

I was amazed when I got back from Guadalcanal and found out that at Kewalo Basin there were LSTs [landing ship, tank] using our landing there. An LST was a fairly good sized ship. And they were using that in Kewalo Basin, loading cargo and troops there. Quite different from what it is now. So I worked [with] stevedores until the end of the war. Got out in 1946, '45, '46. Then I went into construction over in Hilo. Opened up a quarry in Hilo and I worked there for the rest of my career. That was all in construction. Then as a manager for construction activities on that island.

HY: How did you get into that work? What were your connections?

GM: Well, my brother in-law was general superintendent of Glover. They were looking for somebody to work over there, and he asked me if I wanted to go. I was kind of looking for a job at the end of the war. I really didn't want to go back to the plantations. The plantations were—in fact I went looking for jobs on plantations. But, I think, they were paying $150 a month and this was at the end of World War II. I just couldn't see how you could live on that. So construction offered a much better job. So I took that job in Hilo working for Jas W. Glover Limited and opened and operated the quarry there for the next fifty years.

HY: I want to back up a little bit and talk about—this is before you went to the South Pacific, when you were still in Honolulu, you talked about your job, you were working with the military. But just daily life, home life under military rule. If you could talk about adjusting to that different life.

GM: Well, when I was ordered to active duty, of course, I had to go live at Fort Shafter. So I moved from Nu'uanu where a bunch of us bachelors were living together. I had to move to Shafter. So I had quarters at Shafter and I lived there until I married. Then we moved to a house in Mānoa and we lived there until I was ordered out into the field. Once I went out into the field, my wife moved back to the family home because I knew being out in the field you don't know where you're going to end up. And it didn't take long before we were sent down to the South Pacific. So as far as Honolulu during the blackout, being in the military we had advantages. It was necessary for the large military population on the island, it was necessary to keep them fed. So the food problem was relatively easy for the military families. They could go to the commissaries and buy what might not be available out in the open community.

The blackout, you got used to the blackout pretty readily. And driving around at night in the blackouts, we had to pull—I had to be officer of the day about every second or third

day at Shafter. That meant that I spent the night at Shafter every two or three days, spent the whole night and day. You had to be on post. So you're pretty well aware of what's going on. Violations in the blackout in the beginning of the war were probably fairly frequent. But after a while everybody got used to it. And you know how to run it. You got so you could drive around without lights.

We had air raids once in a while. That was somewhat exciting. Only once did the Japanese bomb Hawai'i after December 7. I was in Makiki that night when I heard this strange engine, airplane noise, engine outside. I thought, "Gee, that doesn't sound right." It woke me up. It was about one, two o' clock in the morning. I woke up and I heard this strange engine. "That's not right." So I sat up in bed and started getting dressed. Then I could really hear the bombs falling. You could tell, distinctive. That was right up in Makiki. I heard them explode when it hit the ground. So I knew I had to go back to Shafter. So I went out that night in blackout. That was pretty exciting, all the people running around. There were more cars on the road. More people trying to get back to their duty station. I got back to Fort Shafter and it turned out that Fort Shafter, the headquarters there, kind of knew that this plane was flying around and they were trying to get at it. The radar systems they had in those days were not sophisticated enough to locate the plane exactly. They knew it was there but they didn't know exactly where it was. And they didn't want to stop the work at Pearl Harbor so they left all the lights on at Pearl Harbor. The Japanese plane was no doubt taking pictures and all that. But they didn't want to fire their antiaircraft guns 'cause then it would expose the position where the antiaircraft guns were. Had there been several planes they might have done it but with a single plane they just ignored it. But that was a few tense moments that night.

HY: I assume you had more access and more mobility than the civilian population. There were curfews and whatnot.

GM: Yeah, except that we were—like during the Battle of Midway, the commanding general put out an order that nobody could go anywhere, everybody would be at their duty stations. So you couldn't go anywhere. The civilians may be able to move around because they didn't know about it. But we were all confined for about four days or five days. You had to stay right at your duty station. So I don't think the military—we had a system of passes. You could let one-third of your command go on pass every day. So you kind of parceled that out because you couldn't keep people sitting around the barracks all the time. So one-third of the people go out every day on pass. So the military went on pass, controlled passes. Civilians, they were restricted in that they had rationing. They had gasoline rationing. They had butter rationing and that sort of thing. The military had a little less of that. We still had rationing when gasoline wasn't available to us anymore than the civilian population.

HY: You mentioned one of your duties early on was a censor. Was this military correspondence, was this civilian . . .

GM: No, this was anybody connected with the military. Everybody's mail was censored, one way or another. They designated our headquarters as a censor office for the whole area. This was the beginning of the war, and there weren't that many military troops here yet. We picked up mail from Java, Borneo, New Guinea, Australia came through our office to be censored. That was really interesting reading that stuff because those people had been fighting for days before we got near the thing. The experience of some of the aviators who were shot down in jungles of Java and got out. It was interesting reading. But, of

course, couldn't tell anybody about it. And we let a lot of the stuff go through because we felt, "Well, this is interesting. It's not going to expose any secrets or anything." It was a chore though because suddenly they imposed this censorship and all of the mail just backed up until you could get an organization together to do it. So we had three of us doing the censoring, an all-day job just reading other people's mail. In most cases, people were careful of what they said. Some cases they were not. After you sent it back to them or just chop it up and delete them.

We had to censor, or had to review—they went around Honolulu and picked up all the Japanese films in Honolulu for the movie companies that had Japanese film. The office next to mine, they reviewed all of those. And that was just interesting looking at all these Japanese films. The war, in the beginning of the war in Shanghai and China and all those things were documented. The military took those and took those out of the film and put some kind of story together from those. But it was interesting watching them do that. So, the early days of the war was—I think, maybe until around February, things were pretty chaotic. People were not really sure what they were going to do or should do or what the Japanese were going to do. People were rushing around trying to figure out, "Well, what do we need here? What do we need there?"

HY: Do you remember some of your courts-martial cases? Anything stand out?

GM: I remember some people being courts-martialed. There were a lot of black troops that had come out. I had a lot of black courts-martial cases. A lot of those were things like disrespect for a noncommissioned officer. A lot of those black sergeants had come up from the regular army, and their idea was "rule by the fist." They were old-time sergeants, and they were pretty tough cookies. Some of these privates took a beating no doubt about it. I remember some occasions that I thought the people were not telling the truth when you're talking to them. But later on I met—amazing—I met a fellow who had been a football player for some college back on the East Coast. And we tried him and he got six months for whatever it was that he did. I've forgotten what. But later on, standing on the side of the road in Guadalcanal, this fellow drives by in a jeep and I got to talk to him again after I put him in jail for six months. He and I were buddies out at Guadalcanal. He was a nice guy. But he just said the wrong thing at the wrong time.

While I was up at Fort Shafter I had to—they assigned officers to my company who couldn't really get along in their previous assignment. The army wanted to evaluate the person and see why this guy could not perform his duties well. And they assigned him to me. I had to counsel him and I had to observe what they're doing. Give them jobs. Put them on guard duty and stuff like that. And I had a pilot, P-40 pilot was one of them. Had a dentist, and I had a couple of line officers. That was a tough job because some of these people were kind of screwballs and others weren't. I never could figure out—this one pilot was a nice guy but he wrote bad checks. They sent him up to Canton Island and assigned him to me. I talked to him. I said, "You don't have to do that. You're getting paid every month." And right after that, he goes up to the officer's club and writes a bad check. (Chuckles) So I don't know what ever happened to him. And [another] fellow was a dentist, and his problem was he couldn't get along with his superior. He was a good dentist, worked on our teeth. But he was assigned to us, the kind of people I had assigned to me and the company. It was some experience. It was much easier to go out in the field where I had to sleep out with the mosquitoes than it was handling those kinds of cases.

HY: And you spent another year, is that right, at Guadalcanal?

GM: About a year and half we were out in the South Pacific. Went down to Espíritu Santo which is in New Hebrides. I had a battalion and a half and we went down in a navy ship. We landed at a place called Luganville. We had a battalion just above Luganville and another one on the other side of the island. Our duty was to be defense forces for the island because we were the only military organization on the island other than air and navy battalions. So we were the only army unit there. That was a nice place, but it rained like crazy. But it was a nice place. We had a beautiful campsite. It was up in a coconut grove. And once we cleaned up the campsite [we] had an absolutely beautiful place overlooking a bay and a channel. We did a lot of training there, a lot of heavy training and so on.

Later on, the rest of the regiment came from O'ahu, and they stopped briefly here on the island. We joined them and sailed up to Guadalcanal. We landed on Guadalcanal. At that time, the fighting had moved forward. Again, we were the only organized army unit so we became the defense force for the island, reaction force. We were there for the rest of the period until they decided to move us back to O'ahu. In the meantime, I went up to the island of Bougainville for a short tour. And experiences on Guadalcanal, it was a—our campsite was right on the beach, which was great for all the Hawaiians who wanted to go swimming, fishing and so on. And you're kind of in the middle of the ration chain, so the rations were short. You would get no sugar for weeks and weeks, and no butter for months and things like that. So people went fishing and hunting. Did fairly well at fishing. Fish were really abundant, right off the shore. Make a *hukilau* net and go out and get all the fish you want. Have fish for breakfast, lunch, and dinner if you wanted. It was good to add that to the diet, because the military diet was not that great. Eventually toward the end, we had our own gardens in the back. We planted seeds, and had corn, and cucumbers, and all those kind of things to add to the diet. It was a great experience out there.

One of my platoons was detached from the company and was sent out to a place called Beaufort Bay. It was on the west end of Guadalcanal. They provided the security for the radar station there that was watching for any aircraft that were approaching Henderson Field. I visited out there a couple of times.

At Beaufort Bay was a Catholic mission that had opened in 1900. The priest that was there had arrived there in 1910. When the war started, the Australians sent a submarine in that evacuated all the nuns and all the administrative people out of there. Father de Klerk was the only one left behind. He proved really invaluable during the time the marines were on Guadalcanal because his station was closer to the Japanese than was Henderson Field. So when the planes flew over him, he could radio into Guadalcanal and tell them the planes were coming. But he was quite a character. He was there long after I left the island. He was written up in quite a few of the magazines. (Pause)

HY: Well, you want to jump ahead then, when you started working in Hilo?

GM: Oh. When I went to Hilo we opened up this quarry because there was no—the company had a job of the plantations and they were going to build a road structure because the plantations were moving into truck hauling. So they needed a new road system. So we were out there to build this road system. They needed bridges, they needed pavement and things like that. The company started a quarry and put in a hot plant to make asphalt pavement and put in a concrete plant to make concrete for bridges and things like that. So I developed and ran that quarry. About the time we got ready to move over there—we

were there on a Saturday, and on Monday they had that tidal wave, April 1 of '46. Then our mission kind of changed because besides working on the plantations, we began to work on Hāmākua Highway, replacing Hāmākua Highway. So that was our big work for the next thirty years. We build about three quarters of the highway out to Honoka'a. Plus the volcano and other places that—so it was an opportune moment for us to move to Hilo. Kept us busy clear up until 1960 something. We were very busy. The quarry is still operating.

HY: And this is where you raised your family.

GM: Right, yeah. We lived up in Pi'ihonua, which is the upper part of Hilo. Hilo really hasn't grown that much, but it has changed a lot. Some of the buildings there are much older and they look it. It hasn't changed a great deal. And the population has shifted from plantations, of course. The plantations have all closed down. Those people moved in other areas, either Kona or Kohala side. The population center in Hilo now is out in Puna out in Ka'ū. That's on east Hawai'i. West Hawai'i, the population of course is centered around Kohala and Kona. But when we first went there, Hilo was a very small town. You knew everybody in the town. Now it's changed.

HY: Well, I'm wondering [how] the second big tsunami [in 1960] affected your work as well.

GM: Well, that just increased the load. We were engaged in clean up and rebuilding. The relief monies—businesses had to be moved, and people had to be moved. I remember we built two subdivisions for people who had to move from where they were down on the beach up the hill more. From '60 to '70 was a very busy time. It took that long to rebuild the infrastructure. The hotel area down there and bay-front area was all wiped out clean. And '46 kind of—two waves were different. The '46 wave and the '60 wave had a different effect on the town. And what '46 didn't damage, '60 did. So just like we had to rebuild Hilo. That's what it amounted to. Hilo then began shifting out towards Kea'au. And that shift continued. So now the center of Hilo is moved out toward the eastern end of the island, Kea'au and Pāhoa, both in business and in people. Downtown Hilo is much like it was then. The buildings have been refurbished, but it's not the thriving place it was prior to 1946.

Of course, the railroad was a big, big part of commercial life in Hilo and it went out from Hilo out to Pa'auilo and all the way up, almost up to the volcano, up to Glenwood. It was an active railroad and had carried all the produce. But starting about the beginning of World War II, the railroad traffic began to drop off a little bit because trucking began to enter the picture. By the time the war was over, trucking was competing with the railroad very heavily. So the railroad was kind of on its way out. But they didn't expect the tidal wave. The tidal wave knocked down all their bridges so the railroad closed up completely right after that. The railroad was very busy during the war period because they were hauling troops from Hilo up to Kamuela, up to Honoka'a and Kamuela. And they were very active when the military came, down at the wharf and hauling stuff off to war. So the railroad was gone completely. Once the railroad was gone, then everything turned to trucking and that's why they turned to highways. That part has changed greatly. So the company—when we moved over there, that was a good decision we made, too.

HY: The timing.

GM: Yeah, the timing just happened to be right. Then Jimmy Glover, who owned the company, went down to the military and asked if he couldn't buy some of the surplus equipment that they had, because they had a lot of surplus equipment down at Pearl Harbor. So he went down and bought forty-five trucks one crack. They were military trucks that were being sold for surplus. And we bought a bunch of shovels, and cranes, and all of that was used along the Hāmākua Coast in rebuilding the highway. If we hadn't had those, it would have been a lot harder to do the work. These were very rugged trucks because the military trucks are rugged with big heavy frames and ten-wheel drives. It could go through the mud like nothing. The whole thing was a fortunate series of circumstances. Sad to have a tidal wave, but the recovery from that was done fairly rapidly.

HY: Is there anything else you want to talk about before I ask you to do kind of a last reflection on your UH days?

GM: No. I know we've covered quite a bit. Of course I can sit down and cover in detail, but that wouldn't be of interest to anybody but me maybe.

HY: Well, I'm wondering if your UH education—now you're raising your family in Hilo—is this something you wished for your [children]. I talked to you wife about this, but . . .

GM: Oh, I think that raising the family as far as my university education, I think, what I did was, I really didn't do it intentionally, the courses I took kind of fit in with what I did later. Some of the engineering, and hydraulics, and things like that were essential. But I sort of fell into it. It wasn't by plan. So I would say the university education was always a big plus. There's no doubt about that. The people I knew or got to know, I met later on in life, of course, the university graduates and so on. As far as raising a family on Hawai'i and so on, I don't think there's any real problem in that compared to—I don't know anything about living on the Mainland—but what you hear or what you know, Hawai'i is a lot better, especially in the countryside. I think we found out from my employees and with people in the military, those people that came from the country districts were a lot easier to work with. They were a lot more satisfied with their station in life and whatnot. I think the experience of living in a smaller place is probably good. As far as children, I'm sure it was good. The education that they got, they've all done well in their work. People kind of run down the high schools in Hawai'i—they're not qualified and all that. But if you look at schools that some of these people were going to, you find they're going to military academies, they're going to Stanford, USC [University of Southern California]. Doing well. So I don't know. I figure I can't be anything but satisfied. So I'm satisfied.

HY: Thank you. Thank you very much.

GM: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW